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Guerrilla Forces--
Can We Support Them?

by

CHARLES R. GREGORY, MAJ, USA
Infantry

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School of Advanced Military Studies
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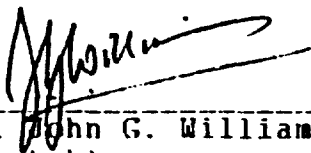
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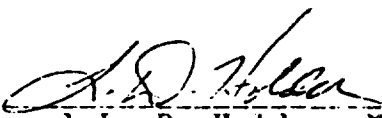
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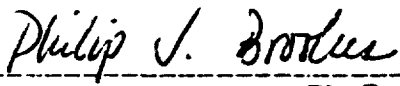
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ABSTRACT

This study determines whether the U.S. Army is prepared to sustain U.S. units operating behind enemy lines as guerrilla forces. History provides many examples where guerrilla forces complement conventional operations. The "center of gravity" for guerrilla operations could be the ability to resupply and provide medical support.

The study examines and analyzes for lessons learned the Chindits in Burma and three operations in Vietnam: Battle of the Ia Drang Valley, Task Force Remagen, LAMSON 719. Next it examines existing doctrine, equipment, and training of Special Operations Forces (SOF) using the lessons learned as operational benchmarks to determine if the U.S. Army could resupply guerrilla forces operating behind enemy lines.

The study concludes that the Army has doctrine to effect resupply operations, has good equipment but needs more, and needs improvement in training. Without increases in equipment and more training, the Army may not be able to resupply guerrilla operations. It makes three recommendations: 1) Keep channeling dollars into specialized equipment which enhances covert operations and protects SOF. 2) Establish support relationships between SOF and helicopter battalions. 3) Maximize every training opportunity by practicing resupply and medical evacuation procedures as if the forces were operating behind enemy lines, simulating combat conditions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL PAGE	11
ABSTRACT	111
TABLE OF CONTENTS	1v
INTRODUCTION	1
SCENARIO	4
THE CHINDITS	5
VIETNAM	12
LESSONS LEARNED FROM CHINDITS' AND VIETNAM OPERATIONS .	16
LARGE OR SMALL	19
DOCTRINE	23
EQUIPMENT	26
TRAINING	32
SCENARIO REVISITED	35
IMPLICATIONS	36
ENDNOTES	39
BIBLIOGRAPHY	45

INTRODUCTION

Since World War II (WWII) all conflicts with United States (U.S.) involvement have been fought in third world countries with poor economies, limited transportation networks, and hostile environments (Jungle and desert). This is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future due to the ease with which these nations can buy weapons. These conflicts are likely to continue to be of low to mid intensity in nature. U.S. involvement could range from limited military assistance to troop commitment. If troops are committed the U.S. could use both conventional and unconventional forces.

The success of guerrilla forces operating in the rear of enemy forces complementing conventional operations has been demonstrated throughout history. During the U.S. Revolutionary War, MG Nathanael Greene successfully fought the British using both conventional and partisan warfare. Portuguese and Spanish partisans interdicted French LOCs during the Peninsular War. This experience prompted Baron De Jomini to write that "National Wars" were the worst wars to fight.¹ Soviet partisans during World War II (WWII) forced Germans to divert units that would have been used on the front lines to protect rear areas and their LOCs. In more recent experience, the Vietnam War demonstrated that guerrilla warfare could interdict both sides, and complement conventional operations. The U.S. faced not only regular

forces, but also paramilitary units comprising both regional and local forces.

Clausewitz In his book, On War, devoted a chapter to "peoples war."² Clausewitz, like Jomini, recognized the value of guerrilla warfare when combined with conventional operations. Clausewitz wrote that for partisan warfare to succeed, the country must be large and have "rough and inaccessible" terrain.³ This precondition fits most third world countries today. Both Clausewitz and Jomini observed guerrilla warfare when people were fighting to protect their country. The Chindits and Vietnam showed that a foreign country's army could enter an invaded country, fight an invading force, and successfully wage guerrilla warfare.

With the proven success of guerrilla forces operating in an enemy's rear and the probability that wars of the future will occur in areas that lend itself to these types of operations, the U.S. Army must prepare to wage guerrilla war. U.S. doctrine defines guerrilla operations as:

Guerrilla operations wear down and inflict casualties upon the enemy, damage supplies and facilities, and hinder and delay enemy operations. The success of guerrilla operations -- even the fact that the guerrillas continue to exist -- lowers enemy morale and prestige; disrupts the economy, politics, and industry of the enemy or enemy-occupied areas; and maintains the morale and will to resist of the native population. In addition, the enemy is compelled to divert manpower and equipment to combat guerrilla activities.⁴

To conduct guerrilla operations, the U.S. needs forces with special skills for operations behind enemy lines. The soldiers placed behind enemy lines must be prepared

to deal with the problems of separation from support structures and remaining for extended periods in the field hiding from enemy forces while still conducting offensive action against enemy forces. These forces will cut enemy LOCs and attack rear bases and command and control nodes.

Operating in third world countries which allow little local procurement and foraging requires external logistical support. FM 100- 5, Operations, May 1986 emphasizes the importance of logistics systems:

Sustainment is equally vital to success at both the operational and tactical levels of war. Campaigns will often be limited in their design and execution by the support structure and resources of a theater of war. Almost as commonly, the center of gravity of one or both combatants will be found in their support structures, and in those cases major operations or even entire campaigns may be mounted to destroy or defend those structures.⁵

As in other operations, the "center of gravity" for guerrilla forces could be the ability to resupply them.

Today the U.S. Army's problem with guerrilla warfare may not be the actual fighting, but how to sustain those forces once behind enemy lines. The purpose of this study will be to determine if the U.S. Army is prepared to sustain U.S. units operating behind enemy lines as guerrilla forces. The paper will make use of the Chindits' campaigns in Burma and the U.S. experiences in Vietnam as operational benchmarks to determine if the U.S. has benefited from the valuable lessons these wars provided. The Chindits entered Burma with 30,000 men in 1944 to interdict Japanese LOCs.

They needed that many forces to accomplish their goals. Today that large a force may not be needed. This study will look at technological developments and determine if less can do more. Then the study will determine if the U.S. Military has the doctrine, equipment, and training to logistically support guerrilla forces. As a framework for discussion, an imaginary scenario will be presented. This scenario will illustrate the most likely type of scenario the U.S. Army may encounter.

SCENARIO

Country X in Central America has been invaded by neighboring Country Y. Country X has a poor economy and small military force. Country Y has been receiving military equipment and assistance from Communist countries for some time and has built a large ground force. Country Y has moved approximately 150 miles into Country X's territory and is threatening the nation's capital. Country X has asked the U.S. Government for assistance.

The terrain in Country X is varied, but mostly jungle with single or double canopy. This limits air operations to cleared areas of which there are few. Forces desiring support in areas other than those naturally cleared areas will have to prepare an area by hand or coordinate assistance from the Air Force. Transportation networks are extremely limited in both Country X and Country Y. Two improved roads run the width of Country X into Country Y.

These two roads have been the major invasion routes of Country Y. There are also several unimproved trails that allow foot or animal movement.

The U.S. Government decides to provide military assistance, both personnel and equipment. The operation will be a Joint operation. One airborne division and one light division will deploy initially to assist Country X and conduct offensive operations against Country Y's forces with the mission to restore the integrity of Country X's border. To complement conventional operations, the U.S. Army decides to insert guerrilla forces into the enemy's rear along the border between Country X and Country Y with the mission to cut LOCs and attack enemy rear bases. This will force the enemy to fight in two directions and prevent them from resupplying front line units. The terrain will not provide enough subsistence to allow the guerrilla force in the enemy's rear to operate without external resupply. Resupply will be by air. The force will operate beyond field artillery range so it will be dependent on its own light mortars or the Air Force for fire support.

THE CHINDITS

The Chindits, whose mission was to destroy railways and disrupt Japanese forces in northwest and central Burma, crossed into Burma in February 1943. They were organized into seven columns consisting of 3,000 men and 1,000

animals.⁶ During the first operation, they moved by foot and carried everything they needed in their packs and on mules. They traveled with five days rations. Mules carried additional supplies.⁷ Because of the limits to what they could carry, the Chindits relied upon air resupply and local procurement. Through aerial resupply they received food, clothes, mail, batteries for radios, gasoline, ammo, and whatever other equipment was needed. Many of the air drops included money so that the Chindits could buy food from the local inhabitants whenever possible.⁸

Mules were critical to the operation because of the versatility they added. The mules increased the hauling capability so that the soldiers could operate longer without resupply. If air drops or local food procurement failed, the Chindits would eat the mules in emergency situations.⁹ Mules also posed certain problems. They required food, got sick, injured, or died. If something happened to a mule, the equipment was either shifted to other mules and the soldiers, or left behind.

A major logistical problem was what to do with the sick and wounded. The Chindits had no transportation system to evacuate the casualties. Mules could transport them short distances. The Chindits would provide the wounded whatever first aid they could and then leave them with some food and water in a village or hide them in the jungle.¹⁰

Their Commander, Orde Wingate, was ordered to return to India and movement began on 27 March. The men were exhausted and now forced to march back to India with the enemy alerted to their presence. They had left behind much of the heavier equipment and killed the mules for faster movement. When the Chindits regrouped in the spring of 1943, 800 were missing.¹¹ Disease, exhaustion, and starvation caused most of the casualties during the march out of Burma.

The reviews were mixed on what the Chindits accomplished during the first campaign. Some feel that though certain columns had some success, on the whole, the results were not good.¹² Whether or not the operation was worth the cost, Wingate proved that long range penetration patrols were useful and that a unit could operate in enemy territory with logistical support received solely by air.

The second Chindit campaign, in 1944, was designed to complement a general offensive by British troops and LTC Joseph Stilwell's Chinese-American unit. The new Chindit organization consisted of six brigades. Wingate planned to cross into Burma with three brigades. Two brigades would be held in reserve, while one brigade would garrison strongholds formed by the first three brigades. The plan was much more ambitious than the first campaign. Wingate decided to cut Japanese LOCs which consisted of road and railway networks and ensure that they remained cut.¹³

Wingate developed a concept called the "stronghold." Columns would place strongholds in areas inaccessible to wheeled vehicles. Wingate, "... envisioned the stronghold as an asylum for wounded, a magazine for stores, and a defended airstrip and base for light planes."¹⁴ The strongholds would serve as administrative areas from which the Chindit brigades were to operate. Wingate hoped to lure small Japanese units without heavy artillery and tanks to these areas and ambush them with LRP columns. Strongholds would be supplied entirely by air. These resupplies would occur on nights with a bright moon. To keep the strongholds as compact as possible, the airfields were placed outside, but positioned so the stronghold could cover them. If possible, the airfields were made strong enough to allow C-47 Dakotas to land and bring in artillery and other heavy equipment.¹⁵ Artillery would provide protection to Chindit columns operating close in and for the defense of the stronghold, but for columns operating outside artillery's range, the 1st Air Commando Group provided fire support.¹⁶

General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, Commanding General U.S. Army Air Forces, agreed to provide a specialized air unit dedicated to support the Chindits. The unit was named the 1st Air Commando Group. LTC Phillip G. Cochran was the organizer and first commander.¹⁷ The 1st Air Commando Group consisted of four principal units: Headquarters, Assault Force, Light Plane Force, and Transport Force.¹⁸

Since the force was experimental it went through several modifications, but when the fly-in of the Chindits began, they had the following equipment: 13 C-47 Dakota transports, 12 C-64 Norseman transports, 12 L-1 and 100 L-5 Light planes, 100 CG-4 gliders, 75 TG-5 gliders, 6 YR-4 helicopters, and 30 P-51 fighters.¹⁹ In India, they received a squadron of B-25 bombers.²⁰

Air mobility gave the Chindits flexibility not normally present, particularly in areas with little to no transportation networks like Burma. GEN John R. Allison, then Deputy Commander of the 1st Air Commando, later said, "It took our ground forces a week to walk out of that valley, over a mountain range and get to our objective. A 20 minute ride by airplane, yet it took a week to get out and the Japanese three weeks to get in and find us."²¹ The Chindits received all supplies by air using three basic techniques: air landing on prepared air strips, parachute, and free fall.

Royal Air Force (RAF) officers accompanied the Chindit brigades during the the second campaign in Burma. This was experimental and the first time that this had occurred in an operation of this scale. The RAF pilots advised ground leaders on the selection of drop zones for supplies and controlled close air support. This technique was successful and adopted by 11th Army Group and put into practice in Burma.²²

The Assault force provided armed reconnaissance capability, close air support for the ground forces, air cap for supply operations, and counter air. They fulfilled the function of heavy and medium artillery. Fighters and bombers could mass more firepower with better accuracy than artillery could.²³ Fighters and bombers successfully attacked enemy airfields, damaging and destroying many enemy aircraft. They attacked enemy LOCs and conducted reconnaissance missions throughout the operation. The Assault force helped establish allied air superiority and kept most Japanese aerial reconnaissance from the landing zones.

The Transport force consisted of C-47 Dakotas and C-64 Norseman transports. The C-47 Dakotas towed gliders, moved troops, and transported heavy equipment. During operations these planes conducted air drops and landed supplies when strips were available. The C-47 could carry up to 28 troops, or 18 stretchers, or 6000 pounds of cargo. Its planning range was 1600 miles and it could attain speeds of 229 miles per hour (mph).²⁴ The C-64 Norseman were smaller than the C-47s and could transport up to 2000 pounds of cargo. The YR-4 experimental helicopters could transport people to remote and inaccessible areas. The unit's CG-4a Waco gliders could carry up to 15 men, and the TG-5 small gliders could hold three men. The large gliders were quiet and could insert men, animals, and equipment into the

enemy's rear. The small gliders would supply and evacuate units in isolated areas, and drop radios for communications. A pick-up device allowed some of the gliders to be recovered.²⁵

The "backbone" of the operation was the light planes, L-1 and L-5 models. During the Chindit's operations, these aircraft flew all missions over enemy territory. The only bases for these planes were the strongholds. Planes staged at the strongholds oftentimes took off and landed under enemy fire. The primary mission for the light planes was the evacuation of the wounded. Additional duties included, "... supplementary supply-drop role, as forward reconnaissance as target markers (forerunner of the current Forward air controller), even as bombers and as a communications link."²⁶ The light planes would ferry officers to other columns and strongholds with messages and orders. L-1s could transport 2-3 stretcher patients while L-5s could transport one sitting patient. L-1s could carry as much as 1500 pounds with an average of 1000 pounds.²⁷ L-5s had bomb racks under each wing and could suspend 75 pound parachute packs for use in resupply missions. The L-5s could also contain a special "wedge-shaped trough" in the rear cockpit, "which the pilot can empty by turning the plane on its side."²⁸

To ensure mission success, the Chindits and 1st Air Commando Group trained together and conducted practice

operations. Through training both the Chindits and the pilots became familiar with the equipment and each other. The pilots modified the airplanes to meet the unique requirements of the Chindits. One of the most challenging modifications was the rigging system for transporting mules.²⁹

The Chindits had a tough time, but accomplished all assigned tasks to support the offensive. Out of approximately 30,000 soldiers, Chindit casualties were as follows: approximately 1500 killed, 2500 wounded, and 7000 non battle casualties.³⁰ After being withdrawn, the Chindits were not formed again.

VIETNAM

The techniques developed by the Chindits and other units and the experiences of organic aviation units supporting ground units during WWII provided lessons and techniques for later units when developing doctrine and equipment for airmobile operations. From 1961-1971 the U.S.'s embryonic airmobility concept took root and produced an unparalleled growth in airmobility. Every operation provided new lessons and developed new techniques to facilitate the integration of airmobility. During this time both the Army and Air Force developed and refined aerial resupply and medical evacuation (medevac) techniques which established the framework for today's doctrine.

Vietnam provided a perfect area to develop and test new technology. The development of the UH-1 Huey, CH-47 Chinook, and the AH-1 Cobra gunship, were large steps forward and provided forces with the capabilities to accomplish operations only dreamed of before. The UH-1 Huey provided the Army the capability to rapidly transport troops and supplies to engage enemy forces. This helicopter also provided a medical evacuation (medevac) capability not previously known.³¹ The CH-47 Chinook provided the army with the capability to transport heavy equipment and supplies. This helicopter could transport artillery batteries to inaccessible areas and then keep them supplied with ammunition.³² The AH-1G Cobra gunship could escort supply and troop carrying helicopters and support ground soldiers with machine gun and rocket fire. The Cobra proved that helicopters were difficult to shoot down, and when drawing fire would force the enemy to give up the advantage of cover and concealment. The helicopters could also bring fire close in to friendly troops which negated the "hugging" technique that the Vietcong developed to protect themselves from tactical fighter support.³³

The Air Force and Army developed procedures that improved command and control and streamlined support operations. Air Force Forward Air Controllers (FACs) lived with Special Forces units in camps and performed vital reconnaissance missions over the camps.³⁴ The Air Force

also supported guerrilla operations. In 1966, the 5th Special Forces Group created mobile guerrilla units whose mission was to create havoc in the enemy's rear. The operations would last several weeks and since these guerrillas could not live off the land due to lack of forage, the SF planned to resupply by air. The guerrillas received resupply every five days. A technique used was to fly an A-1E fighter during either first or last light to the resupply point, and after receiving a signal it would drop napalm containers with ammunition, food, and uniforms. The plane would then fly to another area and drop real bombs.³⁵ Units that repeatedly worked together performed better than those that did not. As one division commander stated, "There is no denying that general support units rarely tend to identify closely with the supported unit, at least not as closely as organic units. This is a simple truism of human nature."³⁶

Vietnam demonstrated the importance of quick and timely medical evacuation. The medical evacuation helicopter, dust-off, greatly improved the morale of the soldiers in the field. The dust-off could land on the spot or hover over individuals and hoist them on board. The helicopter could fly seriously wounded men directly to field hospitals bypassing intermediate stations. This new technique saved many lives.³⁷ In 1968, at the peak of combat operations in Vietnam, medevac flights averaged 35

minutes and seriously wounded soldiers could normally reach a hospital within one to two hours after injury.³⁸

Three operations will illustrate how aviation increased the capability of units to operate in enemy territory. The Battle of the Ia Drang Valley was fought during the months of October - November 1965 by the 1st Cavalry Division.³⁹ During this battle, aircraft delivered 5,048 tons of cargo to troops in the field. They also transported 8,216 tons into Pleiku from other depots. Helicopters moved complete infantry battalions, artillery batteries, and approximately 2700 refugees.⁴⁰

Task Force Remagen, consisting of elements of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) maneuvered up and down the Laotian border for 47 days during March - April 1969 cutting Viet Cong Route 926 and defeating elements of two enemy regiments. During that time they received resupply solely by air. Heavy equipment was delivered by Army CH-47 (Chinook) and Marine CH-46 helicopters. UH-1 helicopters delivered mail, meals, and spare parts. Air support provided the soldiers of the task force over 56,000 meals, 59,000 gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel, and 10,000 rounds of artillery ammunition.⁴¹

Operation LAMSON 719 was a combined operation with Vietnamese ground forces and U.S. aviation and airmobile forces. The plan called for Vietnam to place approximately three divisions into Southern Laos to interdict enemy supply

and infiltration routes and to destroy logistical bases and supplies. The U.S. units consisted of 2d Squadron, 17th Cavalry, 101st Aviation Group augmented with units from the 1st Aviation Brigade, and one Marine medium transport helicopter squadron. There were three operational areas:

- 1) coastal base camps where the helicopters staged at night,
- 2) forward staging bases at Khe Sanh where the helicopters would fly in the morning, refuel, and receive briefings, and
- 3) the area in Laos. This operation was unusual in that the enemy had prepared air defense systems. The Vietcong had 12.7mm 23mm, 37mm, and 57mm weapons. The attack began on 8 February 1971 with a combined air assault and ground attack. By 25 March all major operations had ended. The forces destroyed thousands of tons of supplies and equipment to include: ammunition, petroleum, oils, and lubricants. The operation was successful even though the air defense systems were as sophisticated as any the U.S. had faced in Vietnam. Every mission, even single ship resupply and medevac missions, required extensive planning and support. Each needed fire support plans, armed escort, and downed aircraft recovery plans.⁴²

LESSONS LEARNED FROM CHINDITS' AND VIETNAM OPERATIONS

The Chindits' and Vietnam experiences provided many lessons for the resupply of guerrilla forces: 1) Air superiority is required to resupply guerrilla forces

successfully. If it is not possible to retain air superiority then it must be gained for limited periods to effect resupply.⁴³ 2) Personnel trained to control and direct aerial resupply and close support must accompany guerrilla forces. RAF pilots with the Chindits' columns aided control of resupply and close air support.⁴⁴ These officers helped select drop zones and vector the planes in for the resupply. They also guided planes attacking enemy targets. In Vietnam FACs lived with SF units at the forward bases.

3) Establishing support relationships between ground and air units is important. Air units must train with ground units, so they can develop confidence in each others abilities. Both the Chindits' and Vietnam experiences demonstrated that efficiency improved when units repeatedly worked together.

4) Forward Arming and Refuel Points (FARPS) must be positioned as far forward as possible to facilitate helicopter support. Strongholds provided supply bases and artillery fire support for Chindits' columns behind enemy lines. The 1st Air Commando Group used these strongholds as staging bases to support columns operating away from the strongholds. In Vietnam, forward bases reduced the turn around time for helicopter support and increased the potential for mission success. 5) Aerial resupply requires careful and extensive planning. Drop zones/landing zones (DZs/LZs) require marking and securing to ensure that

supplies land at the correct location. Supply packages must be small and manageable since the guerrilla forces carry everything on mules and soldiers' backs. Forces require resupply approximately every five to seven days. 6) Animals indigenous to the area of operations can increase guerrilla's mobility. Mules increased the load that the Chindits' carried. As stated earlier, animals added certain problems, but they also added other capabilities.

7) Guerrilla columns must have evacuation and extraction plans. The Chindits' morale was very low after the first campaign because of the wounded left behind. Both the Chindits' second campaign and Vietnam demonstrated that soldiers performed much better knowing that if wounded, they would be evacuated. The same goes for the extraction plan. The Chindits had been promised that the second campaign would be short, which it was not.⁴⁵ Guerrillas should operate for only limited periods and if they are told a date for extraction, it should be delayed only in emergency situations. 8) Finally, both wars showed that airmobile operations are risky and the aircraft vulnerable to ground air defense artillery (ADA) weapons. Airmobile operations in areas with sophisticated ADA require extensive fire support planning with artillery and helicopter gunships or tactical fighter support.

LARGE OR SMALL

When planning for guerrilla operations one must consider what size force should operate in an enemy's rear area given the development of sensors and the lethality of weapon systems. This section will look at the technological developments in the areas of sensors and weapons and what these can do to help or hinder units operating in the enemy's rear. It will determine if the U.S. Army's current choice for conducting guerrilla operations is the correct one.

Improvements in guidance systems and lethality of weapons systems have increased the capability of smaller units to attack targets that forty years ago might have required much larger forces. The Paveway family of bombs is a Low-Level Laser-Guided Bomb (LLGB) which can be guided by forces using ground target designators.⁴⁶ Ground troops can stay with the designator and then remove it after the bomb strikes, or leave the designator in place and be miles away before the bomb strikes. As ground target designators become smaller, every soldier will have the potential to guide bombs on target.

The Air Force has developed the GBU-15(V) glide-bomb family for stand-off attack of point and area targets. The GBU-15(V) 1/B has a TV homing device for daytime operations. The GBU-15(V) 2/B, currently under production, uses IR

thermal imagery for day and night operations. Under development is the GBU-15(V) N/B which will use either a TV or IR thermal imagery system.⁴⁷ These systems can be controlled by the firing aircraft or another aircraft. The aircraft lobs the bomb well short of the target and then guides the bomb onto the target. This system allows ground forces to identify targets, relay the target's location to a controlling base, then leave the area and let the airplane guide the bomb to the target. These nonattributable weapons have not only increased the killing capability of guerrilla forces, but have reduced the chances of their being found.

The improvements in IR/thermal photography have greatly enhanced aerial reconnaissance. These improvements have complicated camouflage measures. Depending upon the level of the sophistication of the threat, the opposing forces may have minimal sensors or the best that technology has to offer. High technology systems can turn night into day and can pick up "variations of 0.2 degrees in radiation temperature."⁴⁸ This adds to the case for small rather than large forces operating in the enemy's rear. If large forces are required, small forces remain dispersed until time for the operation, mass for the operation, and then quickly disperse again. These systems make operations behind enemy lines more risky than before.

Ultralights have opened a whole new arena for penetration forces. They are simple to make, cost

effective, and versatile. Ultralights fly low under radar, at speeds too slow to be detected by look down radars, and are quiet. They can now be made with materials such as "kevlar-bonded components" which make them stronger and safer. Some countries have experimented with fitting them with air-to-ground rockets and light machine guns.⁴⁹ The wings fold for storage, ease of transportation, and hiding. Small forces can fly in carrying several days of supply, hide the ultralight, carry out their mission and then all that is required is some gas to extract themselves by ultralight.

The Chindits were a highly trained elite force. Not every force could or should do what they did. Their soldiers suffered much behind enemy lines particularly during the second campaign when they stayed longer than planned. A guerrilla force must be carefully selected if they are to withstand the rigors of operating behind enemy lines for weeks, not knowing whether medical evacuation will work or if they will be extracted when the mission ends. This takes a special type of person, highly motivated, in superb physical and mental condition, and highly committed to unit and ideals.⁵⁰ Special units normally attract the best soldiers through promise of action, better living conditions, and the desire to belong to an elite force.⁵¹ This can only be at the expense of conventional units who tend to lose their better soldiers to the special units.

Keeping the force small decreases the drain on conventional units.

New weapons, new equipment, new sensors, and most important of all the requirement for highly trained and motivated soldiers points to small elite forces rather than large forces. Small forces can move faster than large forces, require less supplies, can mass for large operations, and then disperse again. Small guerrilla forces facilitate movement and security. The primary goal of the guerrillas is to cut enemy LOCs, but a secondary goal is to make the enemy divert forces which could fight in other operations. This is done by striking enemy soft targets and then fading away into the countryside and making the enemy follow. The guerrilla force does not want to fight conventional forces because they are not strong enough and they are fighting in the enemy's territory. Being smaller allows them to blend into the country and wait until time to strike again.

The U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) have the mission to conduct unconventional warfare of which guerrilla warfare is a part.⁵² They are volunteers, have a selection process, and receive specialized training and equipment. SF units train to conduct operations in small units or as part of a larger unit. They prepare to operate independently with limited external support. Based upon the need for small

elite forces, the SF is the correct and logical choice for this type of mission.

DOCTRINE

Doctrine is important to an Army because it provides a common understanding and language to all members. It is developed from past experience and predictions of what future warfare will be like. In Burma the British attempted to fight a conventional war against the Japanese who were masters of jungle warfare. The British suffered until they learned jungle techniques and adapted their style of warfare. Guerrilla warfare was not new, but to resupply by air was. The Chindits had no doctrine for resupplying behind enemy lines. Everything they did was new and provided a basis for later doctrine. The U.S. in Vietnam initially drew doctrine from lessons developed during WWII and the Korean War. As the war continued doctrine developed from first hand experience. The U.S. Army has developed doctrine for supporting guerrilla forces from past experiences and what they expect to face in the future.

The SF have several FMs that give guidance for external resupply of guerrilla forces. FM 31-20, (C) Special Forces Operations (U), states that support for guerrilla forces comes from either internal or external sources. Like the Chindits, SF may purchase supplies. The manual discusses other methods such as establish a levy

system, barter, confiscate, or plant crops if the operation is extended and the land supports it. Supplies not available through such internal sources must come from external sources. The manual establishes three methods:

- 1) Automatic resupply planned prior to the commencement of the operation to include location, day, time, and signals.
- 2) Emergency resupply planned prior to the operation, but triggered if communication has been lost with the deployed elements.
- 3) On-call resupply requested by the elements as needed.

The manual states, "Initially, aerial delivery by parachute is the most common means of supply delivery to UWOA's (Unconventional Warfare Operational Area)."⁵³ Due to past experience and future predictions, doctrine recognizes that forces in the enemy's rear may have to receive external support and that air is the most common form of delivery.

The Chindits and Vietnam showed that supply drops must be manageable since guerrillas may have to carry everything on their backs. FM 31-20 states that,

The preparation of supplies and equipment for delivery to a UWOA is the responsibility of the SFOB (Special Forces Operational Base) support center. The packaging system is based on man-portable packages weighing approximately 50 pounds. This facilitates transportation from the UWOA reception site by carrying parties.⁵⁴

Small drops ease recovery and allow guerrillas to clear drop zones much more quickly.

FM 31-22, Command, Control, and Support of Special

Forces Operations provides:

...doctrinal guidance to Special Forces (SF) commanders and their staffs for command, control, and support of SF operations....It provides the US Army UW community a doctrinal base on which to build and also serves as a reference for non-SF commanders and Staffs under whose auspices US Army SF may operate.⁵⁵

This becomes critical when conventional units are operating in conjunction with SF units as in the scenario. It gives the planners who may have to support the guerrilla force a reference manual and a starting point for working with SF units.

FM 31-24, Special Forces Air Operations, critical for staff officers planning aerial resupply, "...provides techniques and procedures for air operations in support of unconventional warfare (UW)."⁵⁶ It discusses such things as the types of airdrop, types of drop zones, landing zones, marking techniques, and several other items a planner would need to know if tasked to plan and support guerrilla operations. Another manual which does many of the same things as FM 31-24 is FM 100-27/AFM 2-50, USA/USAF Doctrine for Joint Airborne and Tactical Airlift Operations. This manual is an immense aid to the staff officer who suddenly becomes responsible for planning aerial resupply.

As shown above, the U.S. Army currently has adequate doctrine for resupply of forces in the enemy rear. Whether the doctrine will work or not remains to be seen, but it

helps prepare soldiers for war, and provides a start point for that common understanding and language which is necessary to win on the modern battlefield.

EQUIPMENT

The 1st Air Commandos formed from equipment on hand and not from new equipment developed specifically for the operation. Due to the requirement for special equipment during the Vietnam War and the realization that future conflict could result in operations in hostile environments, the U.S. Military has equipment in stock and in development to assist in operations behind enemy lines. The improvements in air defense weapons has forced the development of systems to allow penetration of enemy lines at night, at low altitudes, and with no loss in navigational accuracy. Both the Air Force and the Army will assist in moving forces and resupplying.

The C-130 Hercules will support special operations. This airplane comes in three versions: C-130, MC-130 Combat Talon, and AC-130 Spectre Gunship. The Air Force developed the C-130 for takeoffs and landings on rough dirt airstrips with a minimum of 2000 feet. Its maximum load is 64 airborne troops, or 92 soldiers, or 74 litter patients, or 47,000 pounds of cargo. It can attain speeds of 386 mph and can range 2500 miles with 25,000 pounds of cargo and up to 5200 with no cargo.⁵⁷ With in-flight refuel, its range becomes

Indefinite. The Air Force has added special equipment to C-130s to create the MC-130. This system was developed for the following operations behind enemy lines: Infiltration, exfiltration, resupply, aerial reconnaissance, and psychological operations. This equipment allows penetration of enemy lines at low level and at night to effect resupply operations, insertion or evacuation operations. The MC-130 provides the Air Force the capability to support operations behind enemy lines even if the U.S. has not gained air superiority, only air parity. The planning range for the MC-130 is 2800 nautical miles.⁵⁸ Since the operations will take place behind enemy lines the MC-130 will be the system of choice. C-130s can resupply guerrilla forces, but they cannot penetrate enemy lines with the same security as the MC-130 can. The MC-130 helps protect the guerrilla forces from detection whereas the C-130 may have just the opposite effect. If the enemy sees C-130s in their rear, it will not be hard for them to figure out what they are doing. The MC-130 is also important if the enemy has a sophisticated ADA threat. The AC-130 provides close air support, interdiction, and reconnaissance capability to special operations.⁵⁹

Today's systems have greater ranges, can carry more payload, and have the capability to penetrate enemy lines at night and deliver supplies with more accuracy. The inventory currently contains: 362 C-130s which includes 14

MC-130s. The Air National Guard contains 198 C-130s.⁶⁰ The technology of the Air Force during Vietnam was vastly improved over that of the Chindits during WWII. Many of the same systems used during Vietnam are in use now, and technology is continuously improving. The problem is with the quantity and age of the aircraft. The SOF fleet averages 17.8 years of age.⁶¹ The Air Force will lose aircraft through enemy fire and maintenance failures. With attrition and potential need in other theaters, the Air Force needs more and newer airplanes to support the SOF mission.

The C-17, currently under production, will replace aging C-141s and C-130s. It will have the capability to land and take-off from rough airstrips only 3000 feet long and 90 feet wide. It will be able to execute a 180 degree turn on the ground in only 82 feet. It will carry a maximum payload of 172,200 pounds with a planning range of 2,765 miles. 210 aircraft are scheduled for delivery by fiscal year 1998.⁶²

The Air Force has two types of helicopters for use in special operations: MH-53H/J Pave Low and UH-1N. The MH-53H/J Pave Low can carry 38 combat soldiers or 24 litter patients. Its planning range is 540 miles and maximum speed is 186 mph, but its inflight refuel capability makes its range unlimited. This helicopter is specially equipped for penetrating enemy lines at low altitude and at night. It

has the following equipment added: Forward Looking Infrared Radar (FLIR), Doppler navigation system, inertial navigation system, and the A-7D's computer-projected map display and radar. The Air Force currently has 9 in the inventory with more programmed for later years.⁶³ The UH-1N has a maximum range of 1,611 miles. It can carry 14 passengers. Its maximum cruising speed is 115 mph.⁶⁴

The Army has two types of helicopters for use in moving troops or providing logistical support for special operations: UH-60 Blackhawks and CH-47 Chinooks. The UH-60 has the capability to move 14 combat troops or six litter patients. It can range 1380 miles with external fuel tanks added, and can attain speeds of up to 184 mph.⁶⁵ This helicopter has been upgraded with FLIR and can penetrate enemy lines at night for special operations. The CH-47 Chinook is larger than the Blackhawk and can carry bigger payloads. Depending on loads, it can range approximately 230 miles and travel at speeds of up to 189 mph.⁶⁶ A third helicopter briefly mentioned is the AH-64 Apache gunship. This helicopter is the newest attack helicopter in the Army inventory today. The AH-64 will escort the UH-60 to provide fire support and protection.

The Army today has a better capability to conduct operations behind enemy lines than the Chindits did when equipment is examined and compared. As with the Air Force, much of the same equipment used in Vietnam is still used

today, but the introduction of the UH-60 Blackhawk and AH-64 Apache gunship have greatly improved the Army's ability to operate behind enemy lines. Helicopters can fly low, at night, and land in small clearings to conduct resupply, move troops, or evacuate casualties. However, there are many competing demands for these scarce and special resources. Attrition due to enemy fire and maintenance failures require redundancy in equipment. Both the Air Force and Army need more and newer helicopters dedicated to SOF missions.

During the Chindits' campaigns resupply techniques included air landing by airplane and glider, free fall, and parachute drop. Applying lessons from Vietnam, the air force has developed several methods for resupplying with greater accuracy. Airlanding supplies is the most accurate method for ensuring that supplies arrive on location, but this does not facilitate covert methods. Since guerrilla forces require secrecy, other covert methods just as reliable are needed. One method is free drop. Free drop uses no parachute and is limited to indestructible material. The plane flies slow and at low altitude. This system requires special packaging and is not used frequently. It is also more effective if the supplies can be dropped into a body of water and quickly recovered.⁶⁷ A second method is High Speed Low Level Aerial Delivery System (HSLADS). HSLADS, specifically developed for the Combat Talon, drops equipment as low as 250 feet and can release four containers

at one pass, with containers weighing between 250 - 600 pounds each. This system minimizes risk to the aircraft and crew, and does not compromise the DZ.⁶⁸ A final method in use today is based on a British system called the controlled aerial delivery system (CADS). This system is tailor made for guerrilla forces. The load is dropped at high altitudes and at a distance from the target, for instance at 25,000 feet and 20 miles from the DZ. The system uses a ram-air parachute with a forward speed of up to 25 mph. The load has a homing system which allows for an accurate drop within a 15 foot radius. The system can be controlled by three methods: an operator on the ground, a homing device left on the DZ, or a parachutist accompanying the load with a hand held device.⁶⁹

Improvements in systems have increased the potential for supporting operations behind enemy lines. Technology is better and equipment can carry and drop larger loads with greater accuracy and security. If there is one equipment problem today, it is lack of redundancy. The services have not placed adequate priority on SOF. When the Air Force submitted its 1985 budget priorities, SOF was 59th on the list. This is beginning to change. The Air Force plans to buy 21 new Combat Talons, which will increase the inventory to 34 by 1992.⁷⁰ They plan to modify 12 existing HH-53 helicopters which will bring the total to 19.⁷¹ This obviously falls way short of what is needed. The Army and

Air Force must channel more dollars into equipment to increase the capability to support SOF operations. The C-17 will modernize the force, but it will need the specialized equipment of the Combat Talon for it to be used in support of guerrilla forces. Any airplane can be used to resupply large forces if security is not a problem and the the Army does not care if the enemy knows the location of the DZ and forces. With the importance of covert operations today, money must be channeled into specialized equipment. The advent of the 1st Special Operations Command (SOCOM) should ensure that these requirements are properly identified and funded.

TRAINING

In an interview, BG (P) Wayne A. Downing, Director, U.S. Special Operations Command, Washington D.C., was asked if the U.S. Military has the capability to logistically support guerrilla operations. He stated that the army does not train to support these type operations.⁷² The implications of this are clear. War is the wrong place to attempt missions not practiced during peacetime. Operations, including logistics support, become more risky when crossing enemy lines. When the U.S. Army conducts training exercises combining conventional and unconventional operations, the unconventional forces should exercise the logistics systems in order to demonstrate that they can

resupply by air. These exercises should attempt to simulate combat conditions as closely as possible. Shortage of specialized equipment also makes training difficult. These assets remain centralized and cannot support every training mission.

The SF should practice extensively with less modern forms of transportation such as animals and bicycles. With all of the technological developments, forces are still ground mobile and weather dependent once in the enemy's rear. They may have to walk into enemy territory as the Chindits did during their first campaign. In today's technologically oriented society, animal handling has become a lost art. The U.S. Army once had a manual for animal transportation, FM 25-5, Basic Field Manual Animal Transport, but not today. SF units occasionally experiment with pack animals, but this is not sufficient. During exercises, units can contract to use animals indigenous to the area of operations which will prepare soldiers for the problems of handling animals.

Both the Chindits and Vietnam demonstrated the importance of habitual relationships between ground and air units. This type of working relationship improved confidence in the different units' abilities and enhanced teamwork. To facilitate this type of relationship, the Air Force created the 23rd Air Force Special Operations Wing (SOW) in 1983. It is currently located at Hurlburt Field,

Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. Other forces include five Special Operations Squadrons (SOS): three at Eglin AFB (8th, 16th, and 20th), one at Clark Air Base, Philippines (1st), and one at Ramstein Air Base, West Germany (7th). In addition there is one helicopter detachment at Howard Air Force Base, Panama. The reserves have three SOS. The Air Force SOF train to conduct infiltration operations, extraction, rescue operations, and general support of Army SOF.⁷³ The Army established Task Force (TF) 160, a helicopter unit stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to provide support for SOF units.⁷⁴ TF-160 consists of high technology helicopters which can conduct infiltration operations, evacuation, and rescue operations.

By establishing air units with the mission to support SOF, ground forces can train with air units and develop the teamwork that was so important to the Chindits and Vietnam experience. Since the SOW and SOS's are regionally oriented, and the Special Forces units are regionally oriented, ground forces know which air force units will provide support and can train to build the confidence and teamwork necessary for specialized operations. The army must establish the same associations between SF units and army helicopter battalions. Each SF group should develop a strong affiliation to a nominated medium lift helicopter battalion based in its theater, thereby ensuring the close

working relationships needed to fulfill their operational missions.

SCENARIO REVISITED

The Army decides to insert ten SF A Detachments to conduct guerrilla operations. Seven of these forces are inserted by UH-60 Blackhawks with escorting AH-1 Apache helicopters. The remaining three walk in using mules to allow them to carry more supplies. The forces will remain in the enemy's rear for 30 days. The forces will locate targets and destroy them to cut the enemy's LOCs. At the same time this occurs, the Army will initiate conventional operations.

Unless emergency resupply is needed, the forces will receive supplies approximately every 5 days. To protect guerrilla force locations, Combat Talons will use CADS and drop equipment at high altitudes while the guerrillas direct the bundles to the DZ. The supply bundles will be small and manageable for ease of handling and facilitate clearance of DZs.

Helicopters can move the guerrillas if they are required to move long distances to strike other targets. The helicopters will also medevac any wounded or injured soldiers. UH-60s and AH-1s will penetrate enemy lines at night to move or medevac forces. The guerrilla forces will

secure the LZ and direct the helicopters to it. The helicopters can also bring supplies with them.

Upon completion of the mission, the guerrillas will move to predesignated LZs and will be exfiltrated to friendly territory by Blackhawks with Apache escorts. The guerrillas will then refit and prepare for the next mission.

This scenario is representative of operations the SF could expect to conduct. It has been simplified and does not show the extensive planning and training required to accomplish resupply and medevac behind enemy lines.

Friction can cause many things to go wrong, such as enemy forces on the DZ/LZ, guerrillas not able to reach the DZ/LZ in time to effect linkup with the helicopters, supply drops going into enemy locations, and enemy ADA systems shooting down planes and helicopters. Planning, training, and redundancy in equipment can help to increase flexibility if things go wrong.

IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this paper has been to determine if the U.S. Army can logistically support guerrilla operations. This study has analyzed the operations of the Chindits in Burma during WWII and of some U.S. operations in Vietnam. Several lessons were common to both wars and are of practical use today. Following that the study analyzed U.S.

doctrine, equipment, and training to determine if it exists to support guerrilla forces.

For too many years, the U.S. Army has neglected SOF until they were needed. With the realization that conflicts in third world nations will require both conventional and unconventional forces, that problem is finally being addressed. It will take time to fully rectify the situation. Following are suggestions to expedite this process:

- 1) Keep channeling dollars into specialized equipment which enhances covert operations and protects SOF operating behind enemy lines. Smaller forces are less of a drain on conventional forces and can do more with the increased lethality and accuracy of weapon systems. These special airplanes and helicopters will facilitate resupply and medevac and protect the guerrilla forces locations.
- 2) Establish support relationships between SOF and helicopter battalions. These units should train together and develop the teamwork necessary to conduct successful operations.
- 3) Maximize every training opportunity by practicing resupply operations simulating combat conditions as much as possible. Part of training should include attempting to find SOF particularly when they resupply. This will improve both SOF's ability to receive supplies and Air Force and Army's ability to provide supplies.

These recommendations are essential if the Army is to conduct successful guerrilla operations. The alternative to not doing them is to court disaster if forces are committed to war.

ENDNOTES

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